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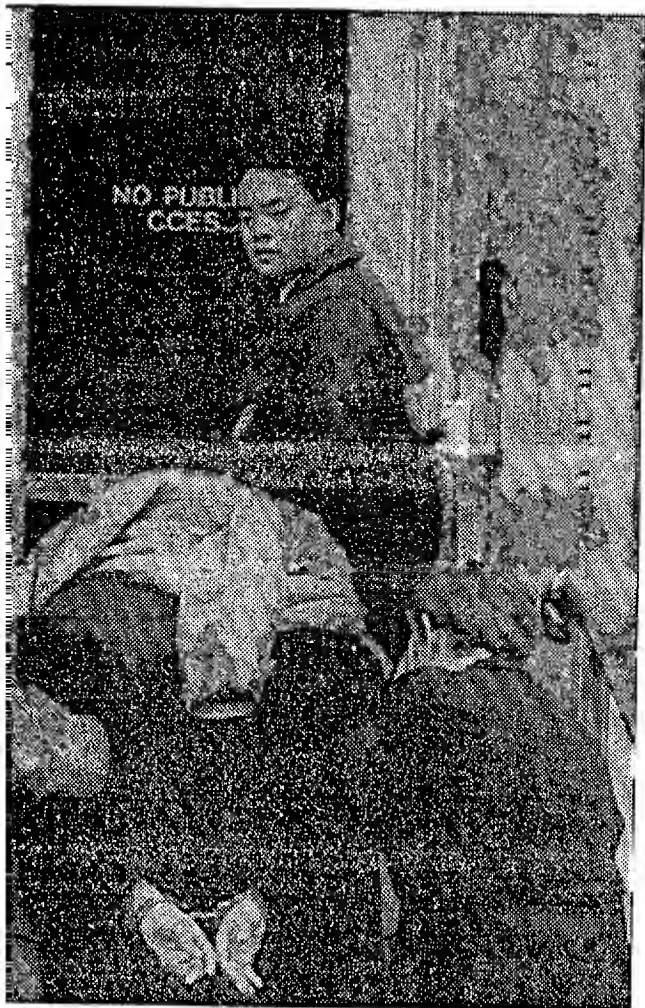
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REUTERS

arrested with aiding and abetting World Trade Center bombing.

Chemical Engineer Held in N.Y. Blast

Mideast Immigrant Linked to Salameh

By Malcolm Gladwell
and Jim McGee
Washington Post Staff Writers

FBI agents yesterday arrested Nidal A. Ayyad of Maplewood, N.J., in connection with the bombing of the World Trade Center in New York and said the Kuwait-born chemical engineer had close ties to Mohammed A. Salameh, the Jersey City man arrested last week in the investigation.

Both are charged with aiding and abetting in the underground explosion Feb. 26 when five people were killed and more than 1,000 injured.

In a complaint filed in U.S. District Court in Newark, FBI officials said Salameh had made repeated telephone calls to Ayyad from outside a rented storage shed containing chemicals that officials said could be used to fashion an explosive device.

The complaint also said Salameh had Ayyad's business card, that Ayyad rented a red sedan believed to have been driven to rent the van known to have been used in the bombing and that the two shared a bank account.

Ayyad, 26, who immigrated from Kuwait in 1985 and became a naturalized citizen two years ago, is a 1991 chemical engineering graduate of Rutgers University in New Brunswick, N.J. He was employed as a process engineer at AlliedSignal Inc. in Morristown, N.J., authorities said. Bail is to be set at a hearing in Newark Friday.

No further details were released about the extent of ties between Salameh, 25, and Ayyad or what FBI officials believe Ayyad's role in the bombing may have been. But James Esposito, special agent in charge of the FBI's Newark office,

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